

**Title 15: COURT PROCEDURE -- CRIMINAL**  
**Chapter 517: ASSET FORFEITURE**

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**Maine Revised Statutes**  
**Title 15: COURT PROCEDURE -- CRIMINAL**  
**Chapter 517: ASSET FORFEITURE**

**§5821. SUBJECT PROPERTY**

Except as provided in section 5821-A, the following are subject to forfeiture to the State and no property right may exist in them: [1999, c. 1, §2 (AMD).]

**1. Scheduled drugs.** All scheduled drugs that have been manufactured, made, created, grown, cultivated, sold, bartered, traded, furnished for consideration, furnished, distributed, dispensed, possessed or otherwise acquired in violation of any law of this State, any other state or of the United States;

[ 2013, c. 194, §1 (AMD) .]

**2. Materials related to scheduled drugs.** All raw materials, products and equipment of any kind that are used or intended for use in manufacturing, compounding, processing, delivering, cultivating, growing or otherwise creating any scheduled drug in violation of any law of this State, any other state or the United States;

[ 2013, c. 194, §1 (AMD) .]

**3. Other property.** All property which is used or intended for use as a container for property described in subsection 1 or 2, and all property which is used or intended for use to defend, protect, guard or secure any property or items described in subsection 1 or 2;

[ 1989, c. 448, §1 (AMD) .]

**3-A. Firearms and other weapons.** Law enforcement officers may seize all firearms and dangerous weapons that they may find in any lawful search for scheduled drugs in which scheduled drugs are found. Except for those seized weapons listed in a petition filed in the Superior Court pursuant to section 5822, all weapons seized, after notice and opportunity for hearing, must be forfeited to the State by the District Court 90 days after a list of the weapons and drugs seized is filed in the District Court in the district in which the weapons and drugs were seized. A weapon need not be forfeited if the owner appears prior to the declaration of forfeiture and satisfies the court, by a preponderance of evidence, of all of the following:

A. That the owner had a possessory interest in the weapon at the time of the seizure sufficient to exclude every person involved with the seized drugs or every person at the site of the seizure; [2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §19 (RPR).]

B. That the owner had no knowledge of or involvement with the drugs and was not at the site of the seizure; and [2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §19 (RPR).]

C. That the owner had not given any involved person permission to possess or use the weapon. [2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §19 (RPR).]

Post-hearing procedures are as provided in section 5822.

A confiscated or forfeited firearm that was confiscated or forfeited because it was used to commit a homicide must be destroyed by the State unless the firearm was stolen and the rightful owner was not the person who committed the homicide, in which case the firearm must be returned to the owner if ascertainable.

[ 2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §19 (RPR) .]

**3-B. Forfeiture of firearms used in the commission of certain acts.** In addition to the provisions of subsection 3-A and Title 17-A, section 1158-A, this subsection controls the forfeiture of firearms used in the commission of certain acts.

A. Except as provided in paragraph B, a firearm is subject to forfeiture to the State if the firearm is used by a person to commit a criminal act that in fact causes serious bodily injury or death to another human being and, following that act, the person either commits suicide or attempts to commit suicide and the attempt results in the person's becoming incompetent to stand trial or the person is killed or rendered incompetent to stand trial as the result of a justifiable use of deadly force by a law enforcement officer. Except as provided in paragraph B, a property right does not exist in the firearm subject to forfeiture. [2013, c. 328, §2 (NEW).]

B. A firearm that is used in the commission of a criminal act described in paragraph A is exempt from forfeiture under this subsection if the firearm belongs to another person who is the rightful owner from whom the firearm has been stolen and the other person is not a principal or accomplice in the criminal act. In that case, the firearm must be transferred to the other person unless that person is otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm under applicable law. [2013, c. 328, §2 (NEW).]

A firearm subject to forfeiture pursuant to this subsection that is declared by a court to be forfeited pursuant to section 5822 must be promptly destroyed, or caused to be promptly destroyed, by the law enforcement agency that has custody of the firearm.

[ 2013, c. 328, §2 (NEW) .]

**4. Conveyances.** All conveyances, including aircraft, vehicles or vessels, which are used or are intended for use to transport or in any manner to facilitate the transportation, sale, trafficking, furnishing, receipt, possession or concealment of property described in subsection 1 or 2, except that:

A. No conveyance used by any person as a common carrier in the transaction of business as a common carrier may be forfeited under this section, unless it appears that the owner or other person in charge of the conveyance was a consenting party or had knowledge of that violation of law; and [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

B. No conveyance may be forfeited under this section by reason of any act or omission established by the owner of the conveyance to have been committed or omitted by any person other than the owner while the conveyance was unlawfully in the possession of a person other than the owner in violation of the criminal laws of this State, any other state or of the United States; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**4-A. Conveyances used in violation of litter laws.** All conveyances, including aircraft, watercraft, vehicles, vessels, containers or cranes that are used, or attempted to be used, to dump more than 500 pounds or more than 100 cubic feet of litter in violation of Title 17, section 2264-A;

[ 2003, c. 452, Pt. I, §1 (AMD); 2003, c. 452, Pt. X, §2 (AFF) .]

**5. Records.** All books, records and research, including formulas, microfilm, tapes and data, which are used or intended for use in violation of Title 17-A, chapter 45;

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**6. Money instruments.** Except as provided in paragraph A, all money, negotiable instruments, securities or other things of value furnished or intended to be furnished by any person in exchange for a scheduled drug in violation of Title 17-A, chapter 45; all proceeds traceable to such an exchange; and all money, negotiable instruments and securities used or intended to be used to facilitate any violation of Title 17-A, chapter 45.

A. No property may be forfeited under this subsection, to the extent of the interest of an owner, by reason of any act or omission established by that owner to have been committed or omitted without the knowledge or consent of that owner; [1989, c. 302, §1 (AMD).]

[ 2013, c. 194, §3 (AMD) .]

**7. Real property.** Except as provided in paragraph A, all real property, including any right, title or interest in the whole of any lot or tract of land and any appurtenances or improvements, that is used or intended for use, in any manner or part, to commit or to facilitate the commission of a violation of Title 17-A, section 1103, 1105-A, 1105-B or 1105-C that is a Class A, Class B or Class C crime, with the exception of offenses involving marijuana.

A. Property may not be forfeited under this subsection, to the extent of an interest of an owner, by reason of an act or omission established by that owner to have been committed or omitted without the knowledge or consent of that owner. When an owner of property that is that person's primary residence proves by a preponderance of the evidence that the owner is the spouse or minor child of the coowner of the primary residence who has used or intended to use the residence, in any manner or part, to commit or facilitate the commission of a violation of Title 17-A, section 1103, 1105-A, 1105-B or 1105-C, the State shall bear the burden of proving knowledge or consent of the spouse or minor child by a preponderance of the evidence; [2013, c. 194, §4 (AMD).]

[ 2013, c. 194, §4 (AMD) .]

**7-A. Computers.** Except as provided in paragraph A, all computers, as defined in Title 17-A, section 431, subsection 2, and computer equipment, including, but not limited to, printers and scanners, that are used or are attempted to be used in violation of Title 17-A, section 259-A.

A. Property may not be forfeited under this subsection, to the extent of the interest of an owner, by reason of an act or omission established by that owner to have been committed or omitted without the knowledge or consent of the owner; and [1999, c. 349, §2 (NEW).]

[ 2011, c. 597, §1 (AMD) .]

## **8. Bona fide lienholders.**

[ 2007, c. 684, Pt. C, §1 (RP); 2007, c. 684, Pt. H, §1 (AFF) .]

**9. Assets in human trafficking offenses.** All assets, including money instruments, personal property and real property, used or intended for use in or traceable to a human trafficking offense as defined in Title 5, section 4701, subsection 1, paragraph C.

[ 2007, c. 684, Pt. C, §2 (NEW); 2007, c. 684, Pt. H, §1 (AFF) .]

A forfeiture under this section of property encumbered by a perfected bona fide security interest is subject to the interest of the secured party if the party neither had knowledge of nor consented to the act or omission upon which the right of forfeiture is based. [2007, c. 684, Pt. C, §3 (NEW); 2007, c. 684, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

## **SECTION HISTORY**

1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW). 1989, c. 302, §§1-3 (AMD). 1989, c. 448, §§1,2 (AMD). 1989, c. 820, §1 (AMD). IB 1999, c. 1, §2 (AMD). 1999, c. 349, §§1,2 (AMD). 2001, c. 348, §2 (AMD). 2003, c. 452, §I1 (AMD). 2003, c. 452, §X2 (AFF). 2003, c. 688, §B2 (AMD). 2007, c. 684, Pt. C, §§1-3 (AMD). 2007, c. 684, Pt. H, §1 (AFF). 2011, c. 465, §§1-4 (AMD). 2011, c. 597, §1 (AMD). 2013, c. 194, §§1-4 (AMD). 2013, c. 328, §§1, 2 (AMD). 2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §19 (AMD).

## §5821-A. PROPERTY NOT SUBJECT TO FORFEITURE BASED ON MEDICAL USE OF MARIJUANA

Property is not subject to forfeiture under this chapter if the activity that subjects the person's property to forfeiture is medical use of marijuana and the person meets the requirements for medical use of marijuana under Title 22, chapter 558-C. [2009, c. 1, §1 (AMD).]

### SECTION HISTORY

IB 1999, c. 1, §3 (NEW). IB 2009, c. 1, §1 (AMD).

## §5822. PROCEDURE

**1. Filing of petition.** A petition for forfeiture must be filed as provided in this section.

A. A district attorney or the Attorney General may petition the Superior Court in the name of the State in the nature of a proceeding in rem to order forfeiture of property subject to forfeiture under section 5821, except that to the extent that such a petition seeks the forfeiture of property described in section 5821, subsection 7, the petition shall be filed only with the written approval of the Attorney General. [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

B. There shall be no discovery other than under the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 36, except by order of court upon a showing of substantial need. Any order permitting discovery shall set forth in detail the areas in which substantial need has been shown and the extent to which discovery may take place. [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

C. A petition for forfeiture filed pursuant to this section by the Attorney General or a district attorney shall be accepted by any court having jurisdiction without assessment or payment of civil entry or filing fees otherwise provided for by rules of court. [1987, c. 648, (NEW).]

[1987, c. 648, (AMD).]

**2. Jurisdiction and venue.** Property subject to forfeiture under section 5821 shall be declared forfeited by any court having jurisdiction over the property or having final jurisdiction over any related criminal proceedings or by the Superior Court for Kennebec County. A petition under this section shall be filed in a court having jurisdiction under this subsection.

[1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

**3. Type of action.** The proceeding is an in rem civil action. Property subject to forfeiture may be kept or stored at any location within the territorial boundaries of the State and is subject to the authority of any court in which a petition seeking the forfeiture of that property is filed. The State has the burden of proving all material facts by a preponderance of the evidence and the owner of the property or other person claiming under the property has the burden of proving by preponderance of the evidence all exceptions set forth in section 5821, except as provided in section 5821, subsection 7, paragraph A.

[1991, c. 461, §1 (AMD).]

**4. Hearings.** At a hearing, other than default proceedings, the court shall hear evidence, make findings of fact, enter conclusions of law and file a final order from which the parties have the right of appeal. Except as provided in paragraphs A and B, the final order shall provide for the disposition of the property to the General Fund, less the reasonable expenses of the forfeiture proceedings, seizure, storage, maintenance of custody, advertising and notice.

A. To the extent that the court finds it appropriate and with the written consent of the Attorney General, the court may order forfeiture of as much of the property as is appropriate to a municipality, county or state agency, or to the district attorneys budget within the Department of the Attorney General, that has made a substantial contribution to the investigation or prosecution of a related criminal case, subject to the requirements of section 5824.

When property is forfeited and transferred to a municipality in accordance with section 5824, the municipal officers of the municipality shall determine the disposition of the property. When property is forfeited and transferred to a county in accordance with section 5824, the county commissioners shall determine the disposition of the property. [1999, c. 408, §1 (AMD).]

B. The court may also order the property sold at public auction and the proceeds of the sale, less the reasonable expenses of the forfeiture proceedings, seizure, storage, maintenance of custody, advertising and notice to pay any perfected bona fide mortgage or security interest on the mortgage, disposed of in accordance with other property forfeited under this subsection. [1989, c. 302, §4 (AMD).]

[ 1999, c. 408, §1 (AMD) .]

**5. Default proceedings.** Default proceedings shall be held in the same manner as default proceedings in other civil actions, except that service of motions and affidavits related to default proceedings need not be served upon any person who has not answered or otherwise defended in the action.

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**6. Preliminary process.** Any Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court or the Superior Court, Judge of the District Court or justice of the peace may issue, at the request of the attorney for the State, ex parte, any preliminary order or process as is necessary to seize or secure the property for which forfeiture is or will be sought and to provide for its custody. That order may include an order to a financial institution or to any fiduciary or bailee to require the entity to impound any property in its possession or control and not to release it except upon further order of the court. Process for seizure of the property may issue only upon a showing of probable cause that the property is subject to forfeiture under section 5821. The application for process and the issuance, execution and return of process is subject to applicable state law. Any property subject to forfeiture under this section may be seized upon process, except that seizure without the process may be made when:

A. The seizure is incident to an arrest with probable cause, a search under a valid search warrant or an inspection under a valid administrative inspection warrant; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

B. The property subject to seizure has been the subject of a prior judgment in favor of the State in a forfeiture proceeding under this section or any other provision of the laws of this State, any other state or the United States; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

C. There is probable cause to believe that the property has been directly or indirectly dangerous to health or safety; or [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

D. There is probable cause to believe that the property has been used or is intended to be used in violation of any criminal law of this State, any other state or the United States. [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW).]

[ 1999, c. 2, §19 (AFF); 1999, c. 2, §18 (COR) .]

**7. Rules.** After January 1, 1988, the prosecution of proceedings under this chapter shall be governed by rules adopted or amended by the Attorney General, pursuant to the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375. These rules shall provide standards for prosecution, settlement, approval of settlement and equitable transfer of forfeited property.

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

#### SECTION HISTORY

1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW). 1987, c. 648, (AMD). 1987, c. 736, §26 (AMD). 1989, c. 302, §4 (AMD). 1991, c. 461, §§1,2 (AMD). RR 1999, c. 2, §19 (AFF). RR 1999, c. 2, §18 (COR). 1999, c. 408, §1 (AMD).

## §5823. PERFECTING TITLES TO FORFEITED VEHICLES

**1. Vehicle report.** Any officer, department or agency seizing any vehicle subject to forfeiture under section 5821, shall file a report of seizure with the Attorney General or a district attorney having jurisdiction over the vehicle. This report must be filed at least 21 days from the date of seizure. The report shall be labeled "Vehicle Report" and shall include:

- A. A description of the vehicle; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]
- B. The place and date of seizure; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]
- C. The name and address of the owner or operator of the vehicle at the time of seizure; and [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]
- D. The name and address of any other person who appears to have an ownership interest in the vehicle. [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

The seizing officer, department or agency must make a diligent search and inquiry as to ownership of the vehicle. The filing of a vehicle report is conclusive evidence that a diligent search and inquiry were completed.

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**2. Procedure.** The Attorney General or a district attorney upon receiving the vehicle report shall petition, within 21 days, the Superior Court in the name of the State in the nature of a proceeding in rem to order forfeiture and perfect the State's title to any vehicle subject to forfeiture under section 5821. The proceeding is the same as for forfeited property under section 5822, except that when the owner of the vehicle can not be determined, the court shall:

- A. Order the State, prior to the forfeiture hearing described in paragraph B, to make service by publication as directed by the court pursuant to the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 4, except that the publication must be made in a newspaper of general circulation throughout the State; and [1991, c. 461, §3 (AMD) .]
- B. Hold a hearing on the petition not less than 2 weeks after all notices required by this section have been given. [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

The final order of forfeiture by the court under this section perfects the State's right and interest in and title to the vehicle and relates back to the date of seizure.

[ 1991, c. 461, §3 (AMD) .]



**3. Defaced or missing identification numbers.** Any vehicle disposed of under this section that does not have a vehicle identification number or the number is illegible must be issued a special number by the Secretary of State under Title 29-A, section 407.

[ 1995, c. 65, Pt. A, §50 (AMD); 1995, c. 65, Pt. A, §153 (AFF); 1995, c. 65, Pt. C, §15 (AFF) .]

**4. Subsequent actions.** Neither replevin or any other action to recover any interest in any vehicle disposed of under this section may be maintained in any court of this State.

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

#### SECTION HISTORY

1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW). 1991, c. 461, §3 (AMD). 1995, c. 65, §A50 (AMD). 1995, c. 65, §§A153,C15 (AFF).

### §5824. EQUITABLE TRANSFER OF FORFEITED ASSETS

In the case of any asset decreed forfeit under this chapter or under Title 25, to any entity other than the General Fund, transfer of title to the asset shall not occur until the transfer is approved by: [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**1. State; agency or department.** In the case of an agency or department of the State, the Governor or the Attorney General;

[ 1999, c. 408, §2 (AMD) .]

**2. County; agency or department.** In the case of an agency or department of a county, a majority of the commissioners of the county; and

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**3. Municipality; agency or department.** In the case of an agency or department of a municipality, the municipal officers of the municipality.

[ 1999, c. 408, §2 (AMD) .]

#### SECTION HISTORY

1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW). 1999, c. 408, §2 (AMD).

### §5825. RECORDS

**1. Records of forfeited property.** Any officer, department or agency having custody of property subject to forfeiture under section 5821 or having disposed of the property shall maintain complete records showing:

A. From whom it received the property; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

B. Under what authority it held, received or disposed of the property; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

C. To whom it delivered the property; [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

D. The date and manner of destruction or disposition of the property; and [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

E. The exact kinds, quantities and forms of the property. [1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

The records shall be open to inspection by all federal and state officers responsible for enforcing federal and state drug control laws. Persons making final disposition or destruction of the property under court order shall report, under oath, to the court the exact circumstances or the disposition or destruction.

[ 1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW) .]

**2. Department of Public Safety; centralized record.** The Department of Public Safety shall maintain a centralized record of property seized, held by and ordered to the department. A report of the disposition of property previously held by the department and ordered by the court to any governmental entity must be provided at least quarterly to the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services and the Office of Fiscal and Program Review for review. These records must include an estimate as to the fair market value of items seized.

[ 1991, c. 780, Pt. Y, §116 (AMD) .]

#### SECTION HISTORY

1987, c. 420, §2 (NEW). 1991, c. 780, §Y116 (AMD).

## §5826. CRIMINAL FORFEITURE

**1. Property subject to criminal forfeiture.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person convicted of a violation of Title 17-A, chapter 45 forfeits to the State all rights, privileges, interests and claims to property that is subject to forfeiture pursuant to section 5821. All rights, privileges, interest and title in property subject to forfeiture under this section vests in the State upon the commission of the act giving rise to forfeiture pursuant to section 5821.

[ 1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW) .]

**2. Commencement of criminal forfeiture action.** Property subject to forfeiture may be proceeded against by indictment of the grand jury or by complaint in the District Court in any related criminal proceeding in which a person with an interest in the property has been simultaneously charged with a violation of Title 17-A, chapter 45. At any time prior to trial, the State, with the consent of the court and any defendant with an interest in the property, may file an ancillary charging instrument or information alleging that property is subject to criminal forfeiture. Discovery in the criminal action must be as provided for by the Maine Rules of Unified Criminal Procedure.

[ 2015, c. 431, §33 (AMD) .]

**3. Seizure upon indictment.** Property subject to forfeiture that has been indicted by the grand jury pursuant to this section may be seized pursuant to section 5822, subsection 6, except that real property subject to forfeiture pursuant to section 5821, subsection 7 may not be seized without prior notice to and opportunity to be heard by all owners of record or upon a finding by probable cause that prior notice to one or more of the owners is likely to result in the destruction, diminution of value or alienation of interest of the property.

[ 1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW) .]

**4. Trial proceedings.** Trial against property charged by indictment, information or complaint may be by jury and must be held in a single proceeding together with the trial of the related criminal violation.

A. Forfeiture of the property must be proved by the State by a preponderance of the evidence. [1999, c. 408, §3 (NEW) .]

B. The court, in its discretion, may allow any defendant with an interest in property charged pursuant to this section to waive the right to trial by jury as against the property while preserving the right to trial by jury of any crime alleged. [1999, c. 408, §3 (NEW) .]

C. At trial by jury, the court, upon motion of a defendant or the State, shall separate the trial of the matter against the defendant from the trial of the matter against the property subject to criminal forfeiture. If the court bifurcates the jury trial, the court shall first instruct and submit to the jury the issue of the guilt or innocence of defendants to be determined by proof beyond a reasonable doubt and shall restrict argument of counsel to those issues. If the jury finds a defendant guilty of the related criminal offense, the court shall instruct and submit to the jury the issue of the forfeiture of the property. [1999, c. 408, §3 (NEW) .]

[ 1999, c. 408, §3 (AMD) .]

**5. Ancillary hearing of 3rd-party interests.** A person not charged in the indictment may not intervene in the criminal action. Following the entry of a verdict of forfeiture of property pursuant to this section or the entry of a guilty plea in open court on the record, the State shall provide written notice of its intent to dispose of the property to any person known to have alleged an interest in the property. The notice may be by certified, return receipt mail or as otherwise ordered by the court. Receipt by a person then licensed to operate a motor vehicle in the State is presumed when notice is mailed to the last known address of that person on file with the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles. A person other than the defendant asserting a legal interest in the property, within 30 days of the date of receipt of the notice, may petition the court for a hearing to adjudicate the validity of any alleged interest in the property. The hearing must be held before the court without jury. The request for the hearing must be signed by the petitioner under penalty of perjury and must state the nature and extent of the petitioner's right, title or interest in the property, the time and circumstances of the petitioner's acquisition of the right, title or interest in the property, any additional facts supporting the petitioner's claim and the relief sought. Upon the filing of any petition for hearing, the hearing may be advanced on the docket and receive priority over other cases when the court determines that the interests of justice so require but in no event may the hearing be scheduled later than 6 months after the petition is filed or after the sentencing of any defendant convicted upon the same indictment. The court shall issue or amend a final order of forfeiture in accordance with its determination if, after the hearing, the court determines that the petitioner has established by a preponderance of the evidence that:

A. The petitioner has a legal right, title or interest in the property and the right, title or interest renders the order of forfeiture invalid in whole or in part because the right, title or interest was vested in the petitioner rather than in any defendant or was superior to any right, title or interest to the exclusion of any defendant at the time of the commission of the acts that gave rise to the forfeiture of the property under this section; or [1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW) .]

B. The petitioner is a bona fide purchaser for value of the right, title or interest in the property and was at the time of purchase reasonably without cause to believe that the property was subject to forfeiture under this section. [1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW) .]

[ 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §14 (AMD) .]

**6. Final order of disposition of property.** Following the entry of a verdict of forfeiture of property pursuant to this section or the entry of a guilty plea in open court on the record and following the court's disposition of all petitions for hearing timely filed by 3rd parties, the State has clear title to property that is the subject of the indictment, information or complaint. The final order must provide for the deposit of the property or the proceeds from the disposition of the property, less the reasonable expenses of the forfeiture proceedings, seizure, storage, maintenance of custody, advertising and notice, in the General Fund, except that, to the extent that the court finds it reasonable, the court may order forfeiture of as much of the property as is appropriate, less the reasonable expenses of the forfeiture proceedings, seizure, storage, maintenance of custody, advertising and notice, to a municipality, county or state agency that has made a substantial contribution to the investigation or prosecution of a related criminal case.

[ 1999, c. 408, §3 (AMD) .]

**7. Default proceedings.** Upon motion of the State, the court having jurisdiction over a criminal forfeiture matter may declare a default judgment of forfeiture if the court finds as follows:

A. By clear and convincing evidence that:

- (1) There was probable cause to support the seizure of the property at the time of its seizure;
- (2) The interested party has knowledge of the seizure of the property or the property was seized under circumstances in which a reasonable person would have knowledge of the seizure of that person's property; and
- (3) The interested party has failed to appear for any court appearance in accordance with Title 17-A, chapter 45 for a violation that forms the basis of the forfeiture, and that a warrant of arrest for the interested party for such failure to appear has been outstanding for 6 months or more; and [ 1999, c. 395, §1 (NEW). ]

B. By a preponderance of the evidence that the State is entitled to a judgment of forfeiture pursuant to chapter 517. [ 1999, c. 395, §1 (NEW). ]

The State may meet its burden under paragraphs A and B by presentation of testimony or affidavit.

The interested party has 30 days from the date of the declaration of default judgment of forfeiture to appear before the court in person, submit to its jurisdiction on the companion criminal charge and to petition the court to remove the default judgment.

Post-default proceedings are governed by section 5825.

[ 1999, c. 395, §1 (NEW) . ]

**7. (REALLOCATED TO T. 15, §5826, sub-§8) Equitable transfer of forfeited assets.**

[ 1999, c. 1, §24 (RAL); 1999, c. 408, §4 (NEW) . ]

**8. (REALLOCATED FROM T. 15, §5826, sub-§7) Equitable transfer of forfeited assets.** In the case of any asset forfeited under this section to any entity other than the State, transfer of title to the asset may not occur until the transfer is approved by:

A. In the case of an agency or department of a county, a majority of the commissioners of the county; and [ 1999, c. 1, §24 (RAL). ]

B. In the case of an agency or department of a municipality, the municipal officers of the municipality. [ 1999, c. 1, §24 (RAL). ]

When property is forfeited and transferred to a municipality in accordance with this section, the municipal officers of the municipality shall determine the disposition of the property. When property is forfeited and transferred to a county in accordance with this section, the county commissioners shall determine the disposition of the property.

[ 1999, c. 1, §24 (RAL) . ]

**SECTION HISTORY**

1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW). RR 1999, c. 1, §24 (COR). 1999, c. 395, §1 (AMD). 1999, c. 408, §§3,4 (AMD). 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §14 (AMD). 2015, c. 431, §33 (AMD).

**§5827. CONSTRUCTION**

The provisions of this chapter must be liberally construed to effectuate its remedial purposes. [ 1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW). ]

**SECTION HISTORY**

1995, c. 421, §1 (NEW).

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